

20<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

## Inside this issue...

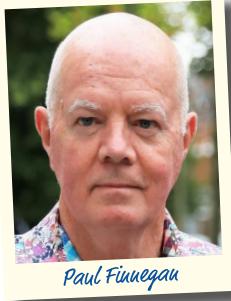
- Lighthouse 'Twenty Years of Learning' Conference
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# Hello...

Welcome to a very special edition of our newsletter, where we continue to celebrate the charity's 20th anniversary.

In this edition, we look back at the number of people we have offered support to over the past 20 years and focus on our upcoming Suicide Prevention Conference, 'Twenty Years of Learning'.

Our anniversary is the perfect time to bring together staff and supporters, professionals, organisations and service users for our conference.



Taking place on Wednesday, 13th September at Girdwood Community Hub, the conference is free to everyone attending. We have lots planned for the day including a panel discussion made up of local personalities who have been through their own mental health struggles and keynote speakers such as Sir Dr Michael McBride and Dr Jeff Hanna.

There will be six workshops, one of which features first responders who will be talking about their experiences of dealing with families in the wake of a suicide.

To register your place at the conference, simply visit <https://lighthousesuicidepreventionconference.eventbrite.co.uk> or call 028 9075 5070 for more information.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Finnegan".

**Paul Finnegan,**  
Executive Director, Lighthouse

## SUICIDE PREVENTION CONFERENCE

*'Twenty Years of Learning'*

**13 Sept 2023**

**Girdwood Community Hub**

Join us to celebrate the past twenty years and reaffirm our commitment to preventing suicide in Northern Ireland.

Keynote speakers include the Chief Medical Officer, Prof. Sir Michael McBride and Dr Jeff Hanna, Research Associate, Institute of Nursing & Health Research, Ulster University



Complimentary lunch  
CPD opportunities



**TO REGISTER VISIT:**

<https://lighthousesuicidepreventionconference.eventbrite.co.uk>

# A Beacon of Hope...

**Cecilia Rice, our Senior Finance and Administration Officer gives us an insight into her role within the charity. We put the following questions to her:**

**Q. How long have you been at Lighthouse?**

I started just before Christmas in 2016 as the charity's finance officer so it'll be 7 years this year.

**Q. Tell me about a typical day?**

A typical day for me starts with an iced coffee and a hug from my fur baby, Glen! My days tend to vary depending on the time of the month. The start and end of the month are the busiest for me. Around this time, I process payroll, pay the monthly invoices from our sessional counsellors, and prepare the monthly management accounts from our finance software QuickBooks. I also work closely with Sharon, our Operations Manager helping with HR and personnel. This involves preparing job advertisements, employment contracts for new staff and enrolment in pensions.

I am also responsible for the line management of our administration and reception staff. It is crucial that there is always someone available to welcome a client or visitor either via phone or in person. I meet with the team regularly to discuss their aims, expectations, and job responsibilities.

**Q. Have you seen many changes at Lighthouse since you started?**

I have seen a lot of positive changes since I first came into post, especially over the past 3 years. When the Covid 19 pandemic hit and the country went into lockdown in March 2020, I was running payroll for 6 people; this month I've processed payroll for 22 people! Due to the demand for our services, we now work out of two buildings and offer telephone, video as well as face to face counselling.

The charity keeps going from strength to strength, expanding its services to the local community.

**Q. What have you learnt whilst working at Lighthouse?**

Since I started with the charity, I have been given the opportunity to enhance my skills and personal development. I've expanded my financial skills and learnt new software packages, such as QuickBooks and BrightPay. I've also recently completed my CMI Level 5 in Leadership and Management.

Although my job doesn't have direct contact with clients, I have the privilege of working alongside a great team. They have taught me to spot the signs when someone needs help, whether it's someone to talk to or sign posting to organisations, like Lighthouse who can support them.

**Q. How do you look after your own mental health?**

Over the last few years, I've become more aware of my own mental health and the best ways to look after myself, which has included talking therapy and EMDR. However, I find that spending time with my husband and dog out in nature helps me immensely. I'm also very lucky to have a great support system with family, friends, and co-workers.



*Cecilia Rice*

# Shining a light over the past 20 years...

Over the past twenty years, the charity has been providing support to people who have been struggling with their mental health or have been bereaved by suicide. With the help of our funders and local communities, we hope that we can continue to offer this support for another twenty years.

Since 2012, almost 50,000 individual sessions have been delivered and around 12,000 crisis referrals have been made. This number includes almost 2,000 follow up crisis sessions and around 5,000 clients who have received support from the charity since its inception.

The charity was established to meet the needs of the local community and to this day, our mission remains the same.



Over, 3000 clients have received therapy sessions from a trained counsellor. Through a therapeutic process, clients have the opportunity to work through issues impacting on their mental wellbeing, in a safe and non-judgemental environment.



Our Complementary Therapy service has supported around 1,200 clients over the past 20 years. This service is invaluable to the client, helping to eliminate the physical aches and pains, promote relaxation and an opportunity to clear and relax the mind.



The charity is committed to supporting bereaved families. Since its inception, our Bereavement Support Service has supported around 700 clients. We offer them a confidential space to work through their emotions in a non-judgemental environment. With the introduction of our Hope, Heal and Help group work, clients can come together with other people in similar positions and talk through their issues together.



*A special thanks to those funders who have supported us from 2011, Comic Relief,  
LFT Charitable Trust, Pilgrim Trust & The Community Foundation*

Since 2011, we have been providing emotional health and wellbeing programmes to over 10,000 young people in Belfast and beyond. These programmes have been delivered in secondary schools and a variety of youth and community settings, offering group work, mentoring, counselling, adventure learning and training workshops. We embrace partnership initiatives, working with our colleagues across the voluntary and statutory sectors. We look forward to continuing to develop new and exciting programmes with the support of our Youth Advisory Panel.

Lighthouse's mission is to save lives and offer advice and support to those affected by suicide. Sometimes clients feel that counselling is not right for them, so we are on hand to support them in whatever they need. Whether its mentoring, group or one-off support, family support or art therapy, we ensure clients get the help they need.



## Leave your legacy towards our future...

will to give

Lighthouse operates to offer advice and support to those struggling with their mental health, suicidal ideation and those who have been bereaved by suicide.

To enable us to be here for everyone who needs our help, we rely on the generosity of the public through donations, fundraising, support from the business community and gifts in wills.

By leaving a gift in your will, you could help fund a support group for those who have been bereaved by suicide or offer complementary therapy sessions to someone struggling. Any gift that you can give will go directly towards our services to help make a difference to people whose lives have been affected by the suicide or mental health illness.

To find out more about leaving a gift in your will to the charity, please contact [Claire@lighthousecharity.com](mailto:Claire@lighthousecharity.com).

# Charity Partner...

We are delighted to announce that leading global professional services firm, RPS has chosen us as their charity partner.

Speaking about the partnership, Managing Director for RPS, Michael Shaw, explained how the company recognised the crucial role the charity plays in the community. They are delighted to be supporting our commitment to working toward suicide prevention and creating positive mental health in our society. The team have already started their fundraising with a bacon bap coffee morning and book sale and we look forward to working with them to raise awareness of mental health issues and vital funds.



## The Big Dander...

What started out as an idea to raise awareness and funds for mental health issues, became so much more during the first weekend in July.



The Big Dander took place on Saturday, 1st July to Monday, 3rd July with participants walking 60 + miles across 3 days. Setting off from Dundalk in Co. Louth, the group followed the Co. Down coast through Carlingford, Newry, Cranfield and Kilkeel before finishing at the Percy French, Newcastle.

This is the 3rd year of the event, and the organisers, Brian and Trudi Elwood were delighted to have the biggest turnout yet. Brian said: "With more and more people getting involved in the concept, the *family* grows each year. Everyone involved this year; whether they walked some of the way or the whole distance; had one thing in common...supporting each other. The camaraderie and friendships which have been made will stay with everyone for a long time.

"Huge thanks also to everyone who supported the event by donating water, printing tee shirts, providing cups for the refreshments, offering up their caravans for the tired walkers or donating the million plus sandwiches, the event wouldn't have been the massive success it was without your support, so thank you."

Brian and Trudi aren't suggesting The Big Dander is a cure or even long-lasting, but from the moment you begin a Big Dander to the second you finish it; whether you've walked, driven a car or helped out in any way whatsoever; you feel love and acceptance. Two emotions that are so, so important in this world today! Mental health issues won't go away so neither will The Big Dander!

**We Are The Big Dander!**

# LIGHT)(OUSE



## Gala Ball

Why not enjoy a fantastic evening whilst supporting a great cause?

Drinks reception - 4 course meal and music from  
Jim Clarke's Erasure Tribute • Mid Life Crisis • The Rock Choir  
and finish the night dancing to hits of the 70's, 80's and 90's  
with the legendary Johnny Hero!

Europa Hotel, 7pm Saturday 11th November 2023

Dress Code: Black Tie

£1,000 for a table of 10. Individual tickets are also available.

To reserve your tickets/table email: [claire@lighthousecharity.com](mailto:claire@lighthousecharity.com)

Associated Sponsor:

*Tony Clarke*  
& COMPANY

Associated Sponsor:

 Balcas

# Ways you can help...

Lighthouse relies on the support of local people and the business community in Northern Ireland to enable us to continue to support people struggling with their mental health. Below are a few ways you can help.

Can you help us make the Gala Ball a Night to Remember? Would you be able to donate or sponsor a prize for the raffle and auction which will be held on the night?

To maximise fundraising which will help us to continue our vital work, we are ideally looking for sports memorabilia, tickets to concerts or sporting events, short breaks or hotel stays or maybe even a red-letter day experience.



Christmas is just round the corner and our little wooden lighthouse decorations make the perfect gift or a lovely ornament for your tree.

Perhaps your company would like to support Lighthouse by asking staff if they would like to buy them for friends and family or maybe you could set up a Christmas tree in the foyer of your building where they could purchase a lighthouse, make a Christmas wish and hang it on the tree.

For more information or to buy your decoration, visit [www.lighthousecharity.com](http://www.lighthousecharity.com)

## Who you going to call?

For all finance queries, contact Cecilia at [cecilia@lighthousecharity.com](mailto:cecilia@lighthousecharity.com)

For all fundraising queries, contact Claire at [claire@lighthousecharity.com](mailto:claire@lighthousecharity.com)

For all operational queries, contact Sharon at [sharon@lighthousecharity.com](mailto:sharon@lighthousecharity.com)

For all other queries, email [info@lighthousecharity.com](mailto:info@lighthousecharity.com)

## Where to find us...

Lighthouse  
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Belfast. BT15 2GF

Tel: 028 9075 5070

Lighthouse is a registered company, limited by guarantee in Northern Ireland. Company number NI065006.

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. NIC102400.

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental ill health, having suicidal thoughts, or grieving from a bereavement please call us today, we're here to help.

